AMENDED CLAIMS
[received by the International Bureau on 14 March 2005 (14.03.05);
original claims 15-19, 21, 24 and 25 are cancelled; renumbering of original claims
20, 22, 23 and 26 as new claims 15-18; remaining claims unchanged (2 pages)]

(b) forming an aperture extending through the compressed region of the material, the material being compressed around the periphery of the aperture; and
(c) separating the washer from the wadding material;
so that the compressed wadding material of the washer exhibits sufficient elasticity at least around the periphery of the aperture such that, when the washer is fitted to upholstery together with a tuft, the dimensions of the aperture may increase sufficiently to accommodate engagement means for the tuft and then return to a resting state after disengagement of the engagement means for the tuft so as to prevent disengagement of the tuft.

10. A method according to claim 9, wherein the wadding material contains fusible material.

11. A method according to claim 10, wherein step (a) comprises compression and/or fusion of the wadding material containing fusible material, such that the washer is compressed and/or fused around the periphery of the aperture.

12. A method according to any one of claims 9 to 11, wherein steps (a) and (b) occur substantially simultaneously.

13. A method according to any one of claims 9 to 12, wherein step (a) is carried out so as to leave an area immediately surrounding the aperture unmodified.

14. A method according to any one of claims 9 to 13, carried out continuously to produce a washer associated with one or more further such washers.

15. Upholstery fitted with at least one washer as defined in any one of claims 1 to 8.

16. A washer substantially as described and illustrated herein with reference to the accompanying Figs. 8a, 8b, 9 and 12.

17. A method of manufacturing a washer from wadding material substantially as described and illustrated herein with reference to the accompanying Figs. 10a, 10b and 10c.

18. Upholstery substantially as described and illustrated herein with reference to the accompanying Fig. 11.